AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1, 2, and 7 and add claims 12-17 as set forth below.

1. (CANCELED)

2. (CANCELED)

3. (ORIGINAL) A data distribution apparatus comprising:

receiving means for receiving a special playback request from an external source;

data storage means for storing playback data, and also storing special playback data and splicing data, both of which are used for playing back the playback data in a special mode;

data switching means for reading the special playback data from said data storage means in response to the special playback request received by said receiving means, and for reading the splicing data from said data storage means according to a buffer state of a data receiving terminal; and

transmission means for transmitting the special playback data or the splicing data from said data switching means to the data receiving terminal via a transmission medium.

4. (ORIGINAL) A data distribution apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the splicing data comprises repeat data which is equivalent to data positioned immediately before the splicing data is inserted.

5. (ORIGINAL) A data distribution apparatus comprising:

receiving means for receiving a special playback request from an external source;

data storage means for storing playback data and splicing data;

decoding means for reading the playback data from said data storage means in response to the special playback request, and for decoding the read playback data so as to generate a special playback signal;

encoding means for encoding the special playback signal generated by said decoding means so as to generate special playback data;

data switching means for selectively reading the special playback data obtained by said encoding means and the splicing data read from said data storage means according to a buffer state of a data receiving terminal; and

transmission means for transmitting the special playback data or the splicing data from said data switching means to the data receiving terminal via a transmission medium.

6. (ORIGINAL) A data distribution apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the splicing data comprises repeat data which is equivalent to data positioned immediately before the splicing data is inserted.

7. (CANCELED)

8. (ORIGINAL) A data distribution method for reading special playback data from a data storage unit to a receiving terminal, said data storage unit storing playback data, and also storing the special playback data and splicing data, both of which are used for playing back the playback data in a special mode, said data distribution method comprising the steps of:

receiving a special playback request from an external source;

reading the special playback data from said data storage unit in response to the special playback request;

reading the splicing data from said data storage unit according to a buffer state of the receiving terminal; and

transmitting the special playback data or the splicing data to the receiving terminal via a transmission medium.

9. (ORIGINAL) A data distribution method for distributing special playback data by using playback data and splicing data stored in a data storage unit to a receiving terminal, said data distribution method comprising the steps of:

receiving a special playback request from an external source;

reading the playback data from said data storage unit in response to the special playback request;

decoding the read playback data so as to generate a special playback signal;

encoding the generated special playback signal so as to generate special playback data; and

reading the splicing data from said data storage unit according to a buffer state of the receiving terminal, and transmitting the encoded special playback data or the encoded splicing data to the receiving terminal via a transmission medium.

10. (ORIGINAL) A data distribution system for distributing data which includes special playback data from a data distribution apparatus to a terminal device,

said data distribution apparatus comprising:

receiving means for receiving a special playback request from an external source;

data storage means for storing playback data, and also storing special playback data and splicing data, both of which are used for playing back the playback data in a special mode;

data switching means for reading the special playback data from said data storage means in response to the special playback request received by said receiving means, and for reading the splicing data from said data storage means according to a buffer state of a data receiving terminal; and

transmission means for transmitting the special playback data or the splicing data from said data switching means to said terminal device via a transmission medium, and

said terminal device comprising:

receiving means for receiving the data transmitted from said data distribution apparatus; and

decoding means for decoding the data received by said receiving means.

11. (ORIGINAL) A data distribution system for distributing data which includes special playback data from a data distribution apparatus to a terminal device,

said data distribution apparatus comprising:

receiving means for receiving a special playback request from an external source;

data storage means for storing playback data and splicing data;

decoding means for reading the playback data from said data storage means in response to the special playback request, and for decoding the read playback data so as to generate a special playback signal;

encoding means for encoding the special playback signal generated by said decoding means so as to generate special playback data;

data switching means for selectively reading the special playback data obtained by said encoding means and the splicing data read from said data storage means according to a buffer state of a data receiving terminal; and

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transmission means for transmitting the special playback data or the splicing data from said data switching means to said terminal device via a transmission medium, and

said terminal device comprising:

receiving means for receiving the data transmitted from said data distribution apparatus; and

decoding means for decoding the data received by said receiving means.

12. (NEW) The data distribution apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the splicing data is read from said data storage means so that a locus of used bits of the buffer state of said data receiving terminal is continuous.

13. (NEW) The data distribution apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the splicing data is read from said data storage means so that a locus of used bits the buffer state of the data receiving terminal is continuous.

14. (NEW) The data distribution method according to claim 8, wherein the splicing data is read from said data storage unit so that a locus of used bits of the buffer state of said receiving terminal is continuous.

15. (NEW) The data distribution method according to claim 9, wherein the splicing data is read from said data storage unit so that a locus of used bits of the buffer state of said receiving terminal is continuous.

16. (NEW) The data distribution system of according to claim 10, wherein the splicing data is read from said data storage means so that a locus of used bits the buffer state of the data receiving terminal is continuous.

17. (NEW) The data distribution system according to claim 11, wherein the splicing data is read from said data storage means so that a locus of used bits the buffer state of the data receiving terminal is continuous.